

Consolation

That this space, I mean
the cubicle of air you occupy
at any given moment

once contained, if briefly,
a dinosaur foreleg.

Amazing, I mean
it seems feasible, I mean
who would ever want to suicide
a world of such possibility?

-- Dennis Trudell

Buffalo, New York

Us Worship

Congratulations, Titinius, you're a hero.
Long underwear is stylish since the wind
Lifted your tunic in the forum, your lisp is
Everywhere among the youth, and the insolent
Doorman is suddenly deferential. You walk
The long hill with Fortune.

Marcus Lucius had warts and delivered
Envoys with a catapult of his own
Design. He showed me once how
He had proved by plane geometry why
Jack and Jill went up the hill but
Couldn't have. Absolutely.

No doubt the Volscians needed
Carving, yet why do you praise the gods
Equally with your sword? In a month
The temple will be jammed with faddists
Thinking they are blessed. But can a god
Merely, as you say, help?

Bag-faced Linus thinks another way.
There are no gods. It is all a system
And everything has a cause. Nothing, he concludes,
Is any use. He sits in a corner,
Doesn't move, and occasionally eats curds.
He is outside the system, he says.

Parades and hermits are interesting, though to carve
An onion or eat one alone is impossible. Anyone can
Check my figures. Linus sits, you climb,
And the crowd cheers for itself,
Necessarily. Everybody is happy.
Congratulations, Titinius, you're a hero!